DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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# AGGRESSION, DEATH AND CIVILIZATION'S DISCONTENTS

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# HUMANITIES WORKING PAPER 9

April 1978

# AGGRESSION, DEATH AND CIVILIZATION'S DISCONTENTS*

Why do we so often find it difficult to establish relationships of love and intimacy? Why has the raising of children been so fraught with problems and conflicts? Why has there been so much neurotic suffering -- so much anxiety, guilt, depression, personal pain and unhappiness -- in the modern world? Why, in a general sense, are the most "civilized" of persons, the successful members of the most advanced societies, so often discontented with their lives? As Freud moved into the final decade of his life, he attempted to formulate general answers to questions such as these. In their more specific form he had, of course, grappled with them from the very beginning of psychoanalysis. And, over the course of his work, a great number of factors had been implicated in neurotic suffering, in civilized misery. Unconscious sexual conflicts of all kinds long held a central position, but there were always other factors, other instincts and traumas. Aggression and the emotional states related to it -- anger, hatred, jealousy, revenge, envy -- were given consideration in many ways. Separations, the loss of love and the ultimate loss -- death -- were also seen as central factors. And various family and social conditions -- hypocritical "sexual morality," seductions, harsh discipline, and other traumatic experiences were known to play their roles. Many of Freud's case histories and clinical

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*Chapter 6 of Freud's Unfinished Journey: Conflict Between Conventional and Critical Paradigms in Psychoanalytic Theory.

vignettes and examples of dreams, parapraxes and jokes contain a mixture of such explanatory factors, though the general theory, as we have seen earlier, remained burdened with the conventional assumptions of its origins. Within this conventional framework, sexuality, described in a language of libidinal energy exchange between objects, was the guiding image. But Freud had been moving to recast the general theory as well, to expand it so that it would more adequately encompass a larger array of motives, traumas and conflicts. The 1920 essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle represented a major attempt at introducing other primary motives -- aggression and mastery -- and the 1926 Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety contained a crucial reformulation of the role of anxiety in neurosis, with a clear recognition of the centrality of experiences of separation, loss and death.

The state of psychoanalytic theory, on the eve of Freud's final, broad formulations, can be described as follows: explanations of clinical phenomena in the case histories and other sources made reference to several kinds of "instinct" -- sex, aggression, self-preservation and mastery -- and to various "traumas" -- sexual stimulation, seductions, loss of love and of love objects, death and the consequences of aggressive or brutal treatment. The general theory or metapsychology gave primary emphasis to sexual energy as motive and, hence, to unconscious conflicts between impulses toward sexual gratification and the forces opposing it: reality and its internalized representatives. Several attempts had been made to

broaden the general theory by adding to the list of primary motives or instincts and causative traumas. And, in both spheres -- the clinical and theoretical -- one found the mixture of conventional and critical, of male-centered and bisexual, of scientistic and psychoanalytic, so characteristic of the unfinished journey.

In the broad essays written near the end of his long and productive career Freud was moving toward an explanation of civilized unhappiness that would be largely free of the paradigmatic inconsistancies of the earlier theory. This explanation -- stated most forcefully in the 1930 Civilization and Its Discontents -- derives from what I have been attempting to describe as the new psychoanalytic paradigm or world view.

The major task of this chapter will be to critically discuss the explanation of modern man's unhappiness as Freud presents it in Civilization and Its Discontents. But to best accomplish this, it will first be necessary to examine the reformulation of theory in two key areas: aggression and death. We will see how the theoretical treatment of these areas -- like that of sexuality and masculinity-femininity -- is caught between old and new paradigms. The clarification of these two concepts will make possible an understanding the crucial role they play in the discontents of civilized man.

## AGGRESSION

Anger, competitiveness, envy, hatred, sadism and masochism abound in psychoanalytic observations. And it is clear that the expression of these emotional states is involved with anxiety, guilt,

attacks on the self, symptoms and neuroses of all sorts. Such factors are present in The Studies on Hysteria and, to one degree or another, in all the cases thereafter. Yet, from the beginning, when the general theory is developed, anger and aggression are left aside and sexuality becomes the central motivational force. For more than 20 years aggression is either left out of theory -- though it remains in the clinical accounts -- or, when present, is derived from libido with the terminology of sadism and masochism. That is, aggression is seen as secondary to the discharge and blocked discharge of sexual energy.

The major change in this single-motive theory is made in Beyond the Pleasure Principle which, as its title suggests, considers sources of motivation other than libidinal discharge or pleasure seeking. Beyond the Pleasure Principle is a complicated work, a mixture of brilliant insights and, in my view, some of Freud's most flawed speculations. On the positive side, it is a step beyond libido theory: the destructive or aggressive instinct emerges as a force coequal with sexuality, as does the idea of conflict between Eros and destruction. Yet, even as Freud proposes aggression as an independent instinct -- a move that will take him, in later works, toward important social criticism -- he becomes most scientistic and reductionistic, attempting to derive aggression from what he terms the basic tendency of all living things to return to an earlier, nonliving state. This is his theory of the "death instinct", a confused concept which must be examined in a bit more detail.

Freud's reasoning behind the death instinct runs as follows:

all living things eventually die; all that is organic returns to an inorganic state. There is, thus, a "tendency" to repeat and a sense in which the "goal" of life is death. Freud points, as example, to experiments with single-celled organisms or "protista." While it is true that all living things die, this biological fact cannot be directly translated into a "motive" to explain the complex actions of human beings. This is the sort of crude reductionism that mars Freud's thought from time to time. He uses the two terms "repetition" and "death" in broad ways to form a bridge from the biological cycle of organic to inorganic to human activities on quite a different level of analysis.

Repetition is employed in a loose and shifting manner to designate three related, but quite different, phenomena: 1) the repetitive cycle of life to death; 2) the repetitive quality of neurotic symptoms and patterns (the "repetition compulsion") and; 3) mastery in which passively experienced traumas are actively repeated. The repetition of mastery can be linked to neurotic repetition insofar as both are attempts to adapt to stressful or traumatic life events, though they are, of course, very different sorts of adaptation. And, it is difficult to see how mastery relates at all to return to an inorganic state. There are connections between neurotic repetition and death, and it is these that have probably given the "death instinct" theory its appeal. That is to say, many aspects of neurosis can be linked to death: anger and attacks on the self, as seen in masochism, depression and related states; inability to live fully or to enjoy life-related activities: especially

sexuality; identifications with lost or dead persons; and, finally, suicide itself. In addition to these death-related aspects of neurosis, Freud's pessimistic view that certain persons seemed strongly committed to their neurotic modes of life -- that they would not give them up to his psychoanalytic efforts, no matter how much pain and unhappiness they seemed to suffer, led him to speak of neurotic repetition as driven by a force so elemental that it must be something like a "death instinct." Such a usage is only metaphorical, of course, and, what is more, it really explains nothing about the neurotic phenomena in question. All of the masochistic and death-related aspects of neurosis can be explained more appropriately with other psychoanalytic concepts -- the powerfully motivating effects of anxiety, the complexities of identifications arising out of early ambivalent relationships, anger and aggression -- which are not the same as death -- played out on an internal stage, and much more. This is not the place to describe these complex processes -- Freud's own cases provide sufficient examples, as our earlier discussion has shown -- and he himself never resorts to the death instinct when explaining an actual case. In sum: the equation of neurotic repetition with the return to death is a suggestive and provocative metaphor but a poor explanation.

The concept of "death" is also used in a loose and shifting manner. Thus, it refers to the fact that living things die, but this fact is then inflated to the status of a human motive, as in the "goal of all life is death." The idea of "death wishes" is then used to

refer to a broad range of aggressive and death-related fantasies. Somewhere in this process death and aggression become equated, and Freud then speaks of "destruction" and a "destructive instinct" as if aggression, death-wishes, death and the death instinct are all aspects of a single instinctual process. Like the mixed use of repetition, the equation of aggressive and death, while evocative as an image, is weak as an explanation. How is this so?

Human aggression is ubiquitous, fighting sometimes becomes murderous and angry fantasies often involve the death of one's enemies. But all this does not mean that aggression and death can be equated, as the "death instinct" theory suggests. For, while aggression may lead to death -- especially in the post-industrial age when man enacts his angry fantasies with modern weapons -- it need not always do so, nor is it the case that the death of the victim is always part of aggressive motivation. Ethologists who study the fighting behavior of many animal species, including all the primates most closely related to man, find strongly motivated aggressive systems whose aim is to attack, hurt, frighten and drive away other species members. But these aggressive systems frequently include "turn-off" actions, as in submissive gestures, which stop such fighting short of serious injury and killing. While the human capacity to use tools often causes our fighting patterns to run out of control, there is no reason to believe that our <u>aggressive motivation</u> is any different than a champanzee's: we are often frustrated, angered and impelled to attack and hurt -- and we sometimes kill -- but this provides no basis for a "biological" equivalence

of aggression with death of the sort Freud proposes.

The instinctual basis of human aggression is, itself, a very controversial topic. But whatever position one holds with regard to it, it is still clear that aggression and death cannot be equated: there is a great deal of anger and fighting that is not connected to killing and death and there is much killing and death -- as in modern warfare -- seemingly unconnected to anger and aggressive motivation.[1] It seems that whenever Freud first takes up a controversial topic such as the instinctual basis of aggression, he turns to the kind of biologizing represented by the death instinct theory. Perhaps he needed the protection afforded by the connection with science, for we saw the same thing in his treatment of bisexuality. Yet, he is also capable of moving beyond these reductionist versions, as he partly did in the case of bisexuality, and as he does later with aggression.

Let us turn now to a consideration of the ways in which the death instinct theory has obscurred an examination of the real psychological and social problems posed by both death and aggression. First, by connecting aggression and death through the idea of the return to an inorganic state, Freud clouds the fact that the separate problems of these two phenomena are quite different. Death is a central psychological issue for human beings, as are the closely related experiences of loss and separation and the grief, anxiety and depression attendant on them. The fact that we can think about our mortality poses a unique problem that other animal species do not face. In addition, our special sensitivity to loss, and the intense

anxiety attendant on experiences of separation -- especially in infancy -- play central roles in most forms of psychological disturbance. All of these issues are by-passed by the death-instinct theory which, stated in reductionist form, does not deal with the psychology of death at all. I will return to the treatment of death in psychoanalytic theory shortly, let us here consider a second way in which the death instinct version of aggression turns attention away from important psychological and social issues.

By attempting to link aggression to a "deep" biological source, the real problems posed by human hatred, fighting, killing, rage, guilt, sadism and masochism -- in their cultural, familial, inter- and intra-personal forms -- are ignored. The death instinct version of aggression exactly parallels the libidinal-energy model of sexuality: as the first avoids consideration of the psychology of anger and fighting the second ignores the psychology of sexual-sensual experience. In addition, in both, the conception of instinct is split: instincts are described as originating in "the body" and impinging on "the mind." Because of this, it is impossible, if one stays strictly within the framework of such models, to deal with the psychological aspects of aggression and sex. (Freud, of course, resolves this dilemma by not remaining within the confines of his own model; with his unique style he always returns to the important psychological issues, using his biological or scientific appearing terms in metaphorical ways.)

Let us consider the problem of this reductionist theory from a somewhat different perspective. The libidinal energy model posits

a selfish, infantile pleasure principle that menaces one's stability from sources within the body. This view, as we have seen, is derived from the culturally-typical prejudice against sexual pleasure and feminine qualities. The view of aggression that posits a death instinct that exerts its inexonerable force from deep within the body, irrespective of one's life experience, is of the same form. And, by focusing on this "biological" source of aggression, the theory avoids a critical examination of the problems that arise in a society which values and rewards a certain kind of aggression; it side steps an examination of aggression-as-maleness, the connections between the glorification of the male as warrior-hero, the rewards for masculine competition and conquest, and the destructiveness of war. In addition, the split or reductionistic view of aggression as a menacing force within, is connected to the culture's characteristic fear of autonomy and will. Let me use the case of Schreber as an example of this last point, and also as a way of contrasting a holistic view of aggression with the death instinct theory.

Human beings certainly behave in aggressive ways; there seems to be something "instinctual" going on, just as there is with the seeking of bodily-sexual pleasure. But such "instincts" do not exist outside of a social matrix which defines them, gives them form and direction. In fact, it is our very conception of such instincts which determines the way they are manifested: there is an inevitable cyclical or -- in many cases in the West, iatrogenic -- process at work. Schreber's father believed that any autonomy or "willfulness"

in the child was a sign of a dangerous, socially disruptive instinct -- a serious threat to adult authority -- which must be sternly blocked, disciplined and crushed. Persons who, as children, experience such treatment of their autonomous strivings come, as adults, to feel the same way about them: the "instinct" is shaped by its social definition and treatment. In other words, if autonomous and potentially healthy aggressive strivings are severely punished -- and Schreber's case was an extreme version of typical European practice -- one comes to view such impulses as violent and fear-related forces within oneself that must be struggled against and repressed. One develops a personal version of a "death instinct" theory. The cyclical connection: cultural conception of instinct ⟶ treatment of instinctual manifestations in childhood ⟶ personal paradigm ⟶ cultural paradigm, works the same as it did with sexuality. There, Freud's view of the pleasure principle as an insatiable and dangerous drive both stems from and, at the same time, reinforces beliefs in the early and severe interference with the infant's pleasure seeking activities.

When the attack on willfulness and autonomy is combined with severe sexual surpression, as was often the case, and when one is prevented from expressing anger towards authorities, as was also typically the case, the stage is set for severe internal conflicts involving all these emotions. One turns rage against oneself, or against those aspects of oneself, -- sexuality, autonomy -- involved in the childhood struggles. Schreber's severe unconscious superego is a classic example. Such frustrated and displaceable

aggression also provides fuel for angry attacks on the "others" -- those who appear more sexually free, more autonomous, on women, on the lazy lower classes, on uncivilized foreigners, savages and primitives -- who symbolize ones's repressed conflicts.

In sum, the actual form of the problems posed by human aggression at any particular time and place are always inseparable from the ways in which the instinct is conceptualized and treated at that time and place -- from the cultural paradigm in which it is embedded. A pathological superego such as Schreber's is an iatrogenic condition, just as were the neurotic sexual lives of Freud's patients. But, to conceptualize the issues in this way, one needs a holistic theory and, while Freud is moving in that direction, his version of aggression in Beyond the Pleasure Principle remains largely trapped within the conventional paradigm.

## DEATH AND LOSS

The "death instinct" theory of Beyond the Pleasure Principle has the same sort of problems with the real issues of death and loss as it does with aggression. Like aggression in its experiential form, the importance of separations, losses and death are to be found throughout Freud's writings. And, like aggression again, these intense human concerns do not find theoretical articulation until quite late: there is a major statement in Mourning and Melancholia of 1917, and a clear theoretical version in Inhibitions, Symtpoms and Anxiety of 1926. Prior to that, issues of death, loss, separation

and anxiety are, in the theory, subordinated to the mechanics of libidinal energy. But actual deaths, losses and separations abound in the case studies, showing Freud's awareness of their importance. Let me review the evidence from the cases here and then consider why it was difficult to include death and loss in the theory.

Anna O., the first of the cases in the Studies on Hysteria, develops her "hysterical" symptoms while nursing her dying father. It is clear that her anxiety, her collapse, and many of her specific symptoms are symbolically related to her father's illness and death. Her nervous cough appears in conjunction with his lung infection and the development of her arm paralysis -- the way her arm became "dead" -- from an incident when it had "fallen asleep" over the back of her chair while she was sitting by his death bed. Her sensitivity to loss is illustrated by the intensification of her symptoms whenever Breuer leaves on vacation.[2]

The other women discussed in The Studies had similar experiences with loss. Emmy von N. -- the first of the cases described by Freud: ". . . was one of 14 children of which she herself is the thirteenth. Only four of them survive . . . . [She marries at 23.] After a short marriage he [the husband] died of a stroke . . . . Since her husband's death, fourteen years ago, she has been constantly ill [with neurosis] with varying degrees of severity". Thus this deeply disturbed woman suffered through the deaths of 10 of her brothers and sisters, and then that of her husband. Her early recollections are of fright when siblings threw dead animals at her and, at age seven, an attack of fear when seeing a dead sister in her

coffin. She experienced other horrible losses, including seeing a cousin taken to an insane asylum and finding her mother lying on the floor from a stroke.

Actual death is not so clear in the case of Lucy R., though the theme of separation and loss of love is prominent (see pp. 114-115). The case of Katharina has already been discussed in chapter 4. While there were no deaths, the outcome of the family's sexual disputes was a loss of fathers's attention (obviously a mixed blessing) and a separation from him.

Elazabeth von R. is described by Freud as follows:

> "First the patient's father had died, then her mother had had to undergo a serious eye-operation and soon afterwards a married sister had succumbed to a heart-affection of long standing after a confinement. In all these troubles and in all the sick-nursing involved, the largest share had fallen to our patient" (p. 135).

Death, loss, separations and the loss of love are prominent in all the cases described in The Studies. These same factors play a prominent role in Freud's other cases as well. The Rat Man, as we saw in chapter 4, experienced the death of a sister in childhood, which served to connect his fears of sexual transgression and the fear of death. Dora, as we again saw in chapter 4, was deprived of her mother's love and attention -- due to the mother's own severe disturbance -- and continually sought love and models in her father's world. And there, she no sooner made an attachment -- to Frau K. for example -- then she was rejected. The Wolf Man grew up in an aristocratic family where he was raised mainly by servants. He was continually being left by his parents, who were both severely disturbed -- probably

psychotic -- so that their capacity to relate to him, even when physically present, was no doubt erratic. The development of anxiety and the fear of horses in the case of Little Hans is interpreted by Freud along the well-known lines of the Oedipus complex: that is, in terms of sexual attraction to the mother, rivalry with the father and fear of his castrating counter-attack. But, the case is open to other interpretations, even from the evidence that Freud himself presents. As Bowlby (1973, pp. 284-287) notes it was primarily the mother who threatened Hans with castration and, of perhaps even greater significance, with desertion. The parents did in fact separate shortly after the events described in the case. Finally, Schreber, whose life we examined in detail in the last chapter, suffered a massive deprivation of love from earliest infancy and this loss -- or lack -- was central to his pathology.

In sum, death, loss and the loss of love are striking factors in all of Freud's cases. Why, then, did it take so long for them to find expression in the general theory? There were many reasons but I wish, here, to focus on one which I consider crucial.

Death and loss are universal human experiences and, while always painful and traumatic, they do not always occasion neurotic reactions. In the prescientific age, coming to terms with death -- both the thought of one's own or the actual deaths of relatives, friends and other members of one's group -- was the province of religion. In primitive cultures, a death is typically the occasion for a ritual in which the members of the group mourn, dance, sing, share food and

physical closeness and in other ways, both concrete and symbolic, reaffirm their connection with each other and the world of nature. [See the account of the Pygmy "Molimo" festival in Turnbull, 1961, 1965]. Death is the ultimate separation and, more than any other phenomena, reminds us of the limits of our ego, of our ultimate smallness in the larger flow of natural events. The participants in primitive rituals deal with this threat by losing themselves -- their individual "egos" -- in an ecstatic-emotional experience in which they become one with the group as the group, in turn, becomes one with its environment. Our religions are meant to serve this function and, for those who are able to believe unequivocally and to emotionally lose themselves, they may be effective. But, of course, it is difficult for many of us to remain believers of this sort in the modern world.

Lifton (1976) presents a more general discussion of this topic. He notes the threat possed by death and summarizes the principal means by which men have attempted to affirm their belief in the continuity of life in the face of this threat. These include: living on through one's children and, more broadly, through one's group; the theological conception of a life after death or, more generally, the idea of a spiritual existance beyond the death of the body; living on through nature itself, the theme of "eternal nature"; and states of experiential transcendence such as are achieved in ecstatic rituals or with the use of certain drugs. As one can see, these modes of coping with death fall within what I have earlier

termed the human-within-nature world view. All of them, in some sense, recognize the vulnerability of the individual human being. All involve an acceptance of our mortality and attempt to affirm the positive potential of our place in the natural world.

Another aspect of the approaches which affirm the connection with nature is their maternal, feminine or passive-receptive quality. Women, of course, are associated with birth and the nurturance of life. We all begin our lives in close connection with our mothers and the psychological separation from her heralds the onset of our independent ego. Much of the symbolism of human-within-nature rituals and religions involve the fusion of male and female, the losing of oneself in "mother nature," a return to an "egoless" state of oneness with the group, and such concrete activities as eating, drinking and sexual stimulation that rearouse the sensations of early mother-infant experiences. To put it in other terms: the rituals associated with this world view contain a strong maternal component: they are bisexual, -- Dionysian -- rather than partiarchal or Apollonian.

The way of the modern state contrasts with these primitive modes of dealing with the threat of death. It takes the threat possessed by our vulnerable place in the flow of nature as a challenge: if we are a part of nature and subject to its death-dealing ways, then this is a fate we must struggle against. Nature is seen as a hostile power "out there" -- separate from our reasoning ego -- a power that we must master with ingenuity, reason, intelligence, control and the construction of barriers -- houses, cities, antibiotics, insecticides,

or more powerful scientific theories and advancing technology -- that ward it off. This approach takes our marvelous potential to separate ourselves from our feelings, needs and place in the world -- our genius as tool maker and language user -- and extends it to the problem of death. And, this approach is associated with men and qualities defined as "masculine": it is aggressive and active in contrast to loving and passive, its images are those of warrier and hero rather than of mother and healer.

Let me stress that the practices and beliefs associated with each of these world views have value. The accomplishments associated with science have done much for the advancement of human culture. But problems arise when the man-against-nature world view is pushed to an extreme. For with all the achievements of our way of life, we are no less subject to death then before. In fact, the very artifacts spawned by modern society -- armaments, cars, industrial pollutants, or the general stress of life in crowded industrial cities -- may cause a higher proportion of deaths than the "forces of nature" ever did for primitive persons. Heroic immortality doesn't work, we die in any case, with death made more painful due to the lack of a belief system that gives it meaning. As Freud himself remarked in a late mood of humorous despair: "immortality evidently means being loved by any number of anonymous people."[3]

Insofar as Freud's early theories were part of the man-against-nature world view, they could not treat the problems of death and loss outside of this framework. This is why it took so long for

him to give death and loss the central place in psychoanalytic theory that their great frequency in the clinical cases would seem to have demanded.

To sum up: both aggression and death were treated inconsistantly by Freud because of the unfinished transition in world views. One finds the same mixture of conventional and critical assumptions and values in the exposition of these topics as there was with sexuality and masculinity-femininity. In the early works, aggression, death, loss and separation are discussed on an experiential level but find no place in the general theory. When they first make their way into the theory they remain trapped within the conventional framework as our discussion of the "death instinct" has shown. To move beyond this framework is to move to a position potentially critical -- in a most profound way -- of the way of life of the civilized state. For a critical view of aggression must examine the unspoken acceptance of male-centered values -- competition, achievement, and heroic action -- while a related look at death and separation will reveal the cost in grief and anxiety occasioned by the lack of maternal, life-connected beliefs and rituals, as well as the effects of disrupted and insufficient mother love.

Yet, for all of these difficulties in treating these topics in ways consistent with the new psychoanalytic world view -- for all the persistance of old values and assumptions, all the ambivalence -- there is a steady forward movement within Freud's work. And, in Civilization and Its Discontents, he clears up many of the ambiguities: in the course of this essay, one finds a remarkable shift in theory,

a break-through of insight and a restatement of basic ideas concerning life and death, love and aggression, and male and female. Let us turn, then, to a consideration of what is in my view, one of Freud's most profoundly insightful works.

## WHAT DOES CAUSE CIVILIZATION'S DISCONTENTS?

Civilization and Its Discontents is a discussion of the possibilities for human happiness and of the many difficulties that block the path to that goal. Years of exposure to the unconscious lives of suffering individuals, the massive destructiveness of the First World War, the rise of Fascism in Europe, his own cancer, and the mixed reception of his genius and his creation -- psychoanalysis -- had all confirmed Freud's skepticism, if not downright pessimism, concerning civilized society. As he explores the question of happiness he makes clear that its achievement is a matter of the fit, or lack of fit, between human potential or instincts and the demands of society. The possibilities for happiness and its converse, neurotic suffering, must be understood in terms of conflict between these two sources; much of the discussion of Civilization explores the details of this conflict. Freud is quite persuasive in showing how -- despite scientific and technological progress -- many remain unhappy. Indeed, this is a paradox in need of a solution: why do so many suffer in the midst of civilization's highest achievements?

As a general answer to the question of why it is so hard for civilized human beings to be happy one can, to put it crudely, either blame our instincts or blame society. As much of the present

book has attempted to demonstrate, the conventional legacy within psychoanalysis arises from and perpetuates the state's own view of itself. This is the view of human nature and society from the perspective of the isolated intellect, from the male or patriarchal position; it casts the blame on feminine qualities -- on sexuality, pleasure, maternity, the longing for connection and oneness -- and does not question or criticize the conventional value system: the glorification of reason, the assumptions that "nature", our instincts and our fellow men are enemies that we must struggle against.

The first four chapters of Civilization is a continuation of this line of reasoning, a perpetuation of conventional views. Then, in two brief chapters, Freud reverses his ground, makes a major modification in his theory of instincts, detaches aggression from sexuality, gives it an independent status and, in the remaining chapters, develops a line of thought critical of the civilization he had heretofore accepted. In this new view, unhappiness is traced to aggression between men and aggression turned against the self in the form of punitive conscience [superego] and the sense of guilt. Where the first portion of Civilization describes female-maternal qualities as a longing for love that is, at base, infantile, insatiable and the root cause of the perennial dissatisfaction, unhappiness and neurotic suffering of human beings, the last three chapters recast these same qualities as Eros. Eros is presented as the great binding force of human nature, the principal hope for happiness in the face of destructive aggression and death. In the terms I have been using, Freud makes a major shift away from the

male-centered perspective, sees its assumptions and way of life in a much more critical light, and moves toward a new valuation of suppressed feminine qualities, which he terms Eros. It is a tribute to his genius that he was still capable of this sort of change, that his ideas were still developing at this late stage of his career (he was 75 when he wrote this essay). Here, in greater detail, is how the discussion in Civilization develops and how it connects to the larger themes under review.

Civilization and Its Discontents begins:

> It is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly use false standards of measurement -- that they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and that they underestimate what is of true value in life. (S. E., vol. 21, p. 64 -- all further quotations are from this source).

If "power, success and wealth" -- archtypical values of the modern state -- are not what is of "true value in life," what is? By the end of Civilization, Freud's answer will be Eros, but he must first work his way through a number of skeptical arguments regarding the various manifestations of love.

He initially takes up the themes of love and human connection as they are found in religion. In The Future of an Illusion of 1927 he had argued that attempts to seek happiness through religion are infantile since they are, essentially, transformations of the child's search for an all-powerful father. His friend, the novelist Romain Rolland, had suggested another source of religious feeling -- something quite apart from the paternal authority and dogma of the organized

church. Rolland described this as an "oceanic" feeling and suggested that it could provide the energy for religion's many and varied forms. This oceanic feeling -- which Freud describes as a sense of eternity, a feeling of "an indissoluable bond, of being one with the external world as a whole" -- could be a source of religious happiness quite apart from the infantile search for a father. Indeed, this oceanic feeling or sense of oneness may be thought of as another version of a continuity-of-life, human-within-nature theme.

Freud recognizes that the sense of connection may indicate a religious path to happiness quite different than the search for a father substitute and he begins the discussion in Civilization with a skeptical examination of it. He starts by tying the oceanic feeling to the earliest stage of development. This is the stage when the infant is, indeed, connected: to his mother. Freud notes that, psychologically, the infant cannot distinguish himself from his mother, nor his "ego" from reality: from his perspective he and his mother are "one". Thus, the oceanic feeling is traced to its infantile origins. This connection, in turn, can be taken in two very different ways: one critical of infantile desire and the other critical of social conditions that disrupt mother-infant love. That is, one can see the search for oneness through religion as but another instance of man's difficulty in renouncing his infantile pleasure seeking, as one more example of unconscious narcissism or neurotic wish fulfillment. In this view, it is our insatiable hunger for love,

our self-centered greediness that, once again, is revealed to underlie a seemingly more advanced social or religious feeling. This is essentially what Freud does say about the oceanic feeling -- and what he will go on to say about related feelings of love -- at this point in Civilization.

How might the issue have been seen differently? One could, though Freud does not, trace a line of thought as follows: since happiness is associated with an oceanic feeling of oneness -- of attachment and connection -- and since this feeling originates in the mother-infant bond, it follows that unhappiness, anxiety and neurosis can be traced to disruptions in this bond. In other words, there is something terribly wrong with the way the modern state has structured maternal-love and it is this that lies behind anxiety, neurosis and our "discontents." There is much in Freud's own work that would have supported such a line of thought -- for instance the many examples of death and loss discussed in the preceding section -- and the new theory of anxiety, developed in the 1926 Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, points in exactly this direction. For there, the infant and child's experience of separation, loss and loss of love are presented as the causes of anxiety. And anxiety is described as the signal which triggers defense, resistance and neurotic symptoms. But Freud, in the opening chapters of Civilization, is not yet ready to pursue this line of reasoning. Rather, he again finds love culpable. He does this in two ways.

First, after giving due consideration to the "oceanic

feeling" as the source of religion, Freud dismisses it. It is, I think, too feminine for him; it gives too much power to the mother. Religion, he affirms, derives from the child's search for a father. "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection" (p. 72). I doubt if many psychoanalysts, or other students of human infancy, would agree with this view today; it seems so obviously an expression of Freud's patriarchal bias.[4]

Second, the oceanic feeling is tied to the intense state of love and this, in turn, is viewed with skepticism.

> At the height of being in love the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact (p.66).

In this view, love is dangerous because it disrupts the boundary of one's ego. A footnote connects the loss of ego boundary in the state of love to the end-of-the-world delusions of paranoia and to other examples of loss of boundaries in severe pathological states. Though Freud had begun this discussion of love by noting that it should not be "stigmatized as pathological," when connected to psychotic delusions, it certainly becomes suspect because of the company it keeps! The problem of disturbed ego boundaries is a complex one that demands at least a brief attempt at clarification.

In essence Freud finds love guilty by association, the connection being the loss of ego-boundaries in intense love and the loss of a coherent ego in states of psychosis. As evidence, he cites the case of Schreber. There are two problems with this connection between love and psychosis which the detailed analysis of Schreber

in the last chapter should enable us to see. First, while there may be some similarity in the two states -- and Freud presents no actual examples of ego-loss in states of love -- the affective qualities of the two are diametrically opposed. Merging with the object of one's love is pleasurable, the loss of ego in psychosis is intensely painful, frightening and -- as "the end of the world" imagery suggests -- experienced as death.

The second problem in Freud's attempt to connect love with psychosis derives from the same source as his attribution of Schreber's breakdown to the emergence of passive-feminine libido. In both these views, love is seen as a force that can overwhelm, if not obliterate, the ego. But, as our close consideration of Schreber's childhood and life demonstrated, his psychosis was not brought on by too much love but by its absence, or, more accurately, by a complex of factors that produced an adult personality so rigid, so terrified of pleasure and freedom, and so self-hating that love was impossible.

Freud further links love and psychosis with the terminology of libido theory: psychosis is an example of "narcissistic" libidinal investment -- presumably love of oneself -- while love is based on an investment of libido in others or "objects." As we have repeatedly seen, the language of libido is used in two, shifting senses which makes Freud's position on the role of love in psychosis unclear. What is the relation between love of self and love of others in psychosis? If one takes libido theory literally, it seems as if there is a limited amount of love -- the "constant quantity" of libidinal

energy -- so that love of others "depletes" love of oneself. As we will see in a moment, Freud does seem to hold this view, at least at the level of theory. But there is another possibility: that one turns toward one's self as a love-object because relations with others are -- or have been in childhood -- so frustrating, so anxiety provoking, so bound up with feelings of rage, fear and helplessness, that one dare not risk them. Much recent evidence concerning the family experience of persons who become psychotic supports this second position; it shows that these individuals do, indeed, have intensely frustrating family experiences which make it very difficult for them to love or trust others.[5] Like Anna O., Katharina, Dora and Schreber, the children in these families are subject to intensely conflicted communications and actions. They are singularly unloved by the others in their families (subject to "double-binds," "pseudomutuality," mystification and rejections) and come to internalize these experiences, feeling hate for themselves and those who have mistreated them, along with intense longing for human contact and an even more intense anxiety over risking such contact.

Love as a path to happiness is given further consideration in the second chapter of Civilization where it continues to be viewed with caution and fear. Love provides a model of intensely pleasurable states, yet it is dangerous: "We are never so defenseless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost our loved object or its love" (p. 82). This is true, of course -- we always risk painful loss when we allow ourselves to love. But Freud's discussion, and the examples he gives, imply much more than

this obvious risk. Underlying his skeptical discussion of love are the same conventional assumptions that were active in the metapsychological view of libido. Love, like libidinal energy, is potentially disruptive. There is a scarcity of it: in early papers this occured as the idea of "actual neurosis" -- if you used up your sexual energy in masturbation it sapped your strength (made you "neuresthenic"). In the metapsychological papers of 1914-15 it is seen as the:

> . . . antithesis between ego-libido and object-libido. The more of the one is employed, the more the other becomes depleted. The highest phase of development of which object-libido is capable is seen in the state of being in love, when the subject seems to give up his own personality in favour of an object cathexis; while we have the opposite condition in the paranoic's phantasy (or self-perception) of the "end of the world" (On Narcissism, p. 76).

We see in these ideas a carry-over of conventional sexual taboos and views of love and the feminine, for the image of having one's ego swallowed up in love is the sort of nineteenth century idea that arises from the same source which feared children would be overwhelmed with sexual feelings if they touched their genitals, saw adults engaged in sexual intercourse, or sucked their thumbs. That is, it is based on a fear of love -- of losing one's ego, of being engulfed -- that is not endemic to love, but arises when love, like sex, has long been infused with excessive prohibitions and taboos. Within this system of belief, love cannot even be conceptualized apart form images of loss and engulfment. Surely states of egolessness, or the fusion of self with other, occur in love relationships. But

the person who is not overly anxious about love -- who does not feel love and sex as threats, who does not experience intense guilt concomitant with intimacy -- could enjoy such states of connection. They should not pose a threat of permanent ego loss except, again, in the individual with severe inner conflicts. Of course there is the real danger of painful loss when one loves but, as Freud himself has pointed out in other places, relationships of love are central to a meaningful life: the greater pain and loss is incurred by the person who cannot or does not risk such relationships.

To sum up so far, we have seen how Freud's discussion of love has continued to link it with frightening images of loss. If one fully gives way to love there is the danger of losing the love object. In intense states of love there is the danger of losing one's ego in a fusion with the object. Connected to these dangerous conditions are the images of loss of reason and loss of ego in psychosis. And behind all of these is the ultimate loss: death itself. Intense experiences of love and sexual involvement are pictured as death-like. To this cluster of imagined fears -- love-fusion, loss of ego, loss of sanity, death -- Freud opposes another cluster: tempered love (sublimated or "aim-inhibited libido"), reason, the way of science and civilization. There is, in other words, a permissible -- a less dangerous -- form of love; one that is somewhat desexualized. Freud's advocacy of this reason-modulated love, along with the fears of love and loss, can be traced to the conventional valuation of reason over emotion and male qualities over the female. Within this framework, departures from reason, feelings of softness, "weakness,"

dependence on women, the full expression of grief and mourning, or almost any intense experience of emotion, are viewed as threats to one's precariously defended masculine integrity. In other words, the fear of loss -- of ego, of love object, of sanity -- is connected to man's fear of women and the feminine.[6]

The fear of love and its connection with death can be understood when we realize that Freud, like most members of his society, was exposed to a scarcity of love in infancy and childhood. And this experience led to ambivalence towards love itself and the "objects" of love -- women and mothers. If one is subject to prolonged deprivation of a normal human desire or activity, it often acquires a greatly intensified value. Thus, persons who are starving become obsessed with elaborate gastronomical fantasies. The "sexual" nature of curiosity and looking, as another example, was greatly enhanced, if not created, by the secrecy surrounding sexual functions and the sight of the human body characteristic of Freud's time. Sexuality <u>is</u> intrinsically interesting because of the bodily-pleasurable feelings involved, but the <u>sexualization</u> of curiosity is intensified by the extensive cover-up; children will be strongly driven to look at the exciting mysteries that are so valued (both positively and negatively) that they are surrounded by great numbers of garments, locked doors and taboos.

The sexualization of curiosity is an example of a more pervasive conflict: the powerful-threatening desires aroused by the deprivation of human contact, love and sensual pleasure in the infancy

and childhood of most persons in Freud's society. It was common for them to be pushed away from physical contact with adults and to be weaned early. They were then threatened or punished for those transitional actions (thumb-sucking, masturbation and sexual play) with which young children bridge the gap from mother's love to increasing independence. They were, in many ways, expected to renounce the sensual-pleasurable experiences associated with love at an extremely early age and to behave like "little men" and "little women." Thus, like victims of starvation, they came to adult love from a background of deprivation, anxiety, rage and guilt: a background conducive to fantasies which exaggerate the power of the deprived experience. I think the image of being swallowed up in love -- of losing one's "ego" in the other -- is just such a fantasy. It is the wonderful-terrifying vision of a love-starved society. The more deprived in early life, the more intense is this conflict likely to be, which fits with observations of severely disturbed persons whose fear of the love they long for is often expressed in fantasies of engulfment and loss of ego or self.[7]

Freud's skeptical treatment of love in the initial chapters of Civilization reflects the continuing influence of conventional, male-centered values, values which had so much influence throughout his theories. In his view of the oedipal conflict, for example, it is the father's power as rival and castrator that is the prime source of anxiety, rather than the loss of the mother's love and care. In Totem and Taboo, civilization itself is pictured as originating

out of a battle between the primeval father and the band of son-brothers. Freud imagines a precivilized state in which a tyranical father ruled over the sons, hording the women to himself. The brothers must kill him to get their share, but their crime is the origin of guilt and self-control and, hence, the beginnings of the rule of law and civilization. While this fantasy captures an aspect of the conflicts of civilization, one is struck by what it leaves out. For where are mothers, love, child care, and family ties in all this? How did the sons and brothers -- or the primeval father himself for that matter -- ever reach adulthood? Who nursed and cared for them? The image of Totem and Taboo seems characteristic of western fantasies that neglect the role of women and repress man's feminine side, that try to derive civlization's achievements from the clash of male aggression, rivalry and power.

Where Totem and Taboo located the origins of guilt, conscience and civilized rule in the son's overthrow of the father, other works depicted women as ethically inferior, with "weak super-egos" and less capacity for guilt. Thus, in the 1915 "Observations on Transference-love", Freud speaks of

> Women of elemental passionateness who tolerate no surrogates. They are children of nature who refuse to accept the psychical in place of the material, who, in the poet's words, are accessible only to 'The logic of soup, with dumplings for arguments.' With such people one has the choice between returning their love or else bringing down upon oneself the full enmity of a woman scorned." (pp. 166-167).

Few would deny that there are people (men and women) who

act this way, but Freud singles out women. The image of "women of an elemental passionateness" reminds us of the earlier example of the "love-object" that is capable of swallowing up the man's ego. The call of Circe and the Sirens is audible here; the woman as seductress or temptess, unable to control her passion and luring the male to a state of dissolution. To the clinically experienced, this sounds like the projection of a fantasy, a fantasy about women from the male unconscious.

Yet, while this general view of women, sexuality, motherhood and love is a persistent and dominant theme throughout Freud's writings, it undergoes a complete reversal in the final four chapters of Civilization and Its Discontents. In chapter four, preparatory to this reversal, he is again considering love as a potential path toward human happiness. Here is a crucial passage:

> . . . women soon come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence -- those very women who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of civilization by the claims of their love. Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has become increasingly the business of men, it confronts them with ever more difficult tasks and compels them to carry out instinctual sublimations of which women are little capable. Since a man does not have unlimited quantities of psychical energy at his disposal, he has to accomplish his tasks by making an expedient distribution of his libido. What he employs for cultural aims he to a great extent withdraws from women and sexual life. His constant association with men, and his dependence on his relations with them, even estrange him from his duties as a husband and father. Thus, the woman finds herself forced

> into the background by the claims of civilization and she adopts a hostile attitude towards it. (pp. 103-104).

This passage is interesting in several ways. Freud continues to view women as opposed to civilization and as aligned with sexuality and love, but adds an emphasis on their committment to "the family." While he places men at the center of civilized business, much of the discussion in the essay up to this point has been critical of just what that business is. Crucial, of course, are the examples one supplies for the conflicting interests alluded to in the quoted passage. If one thinks of the "work of civilization" as science and art, then women's opposition, -- their "retarding and restraining influence" in favor of love -- seems a form of infantile selfishness. But if one thinks of "the work of civilization" as warfare, as the conquest and subjugation of foreign peoples, as sending young children into coal mines and factories where they are worked into a state of ill-health and early death, then women's opposition -- their "restraining influence," -- appears in quite a different light. It is the mother's perennial cry against the state's conscription of her son, her protest that he not be used as a cog in the machinery of war or industry. Recall that Freud wrote Civilization in 1930, in Europe, after the immense and senseless slaughter of the First World War, on the threshold of the new Nazi barbarism. His views on love, civilization and the causes of unhappiness are about to undergo a radical shift; one can almost feel him struggle to a new position in the writing of this essay.

Chapter five moves from an emphasis on the roles of love and sexuality in human unhappiness to an increasing recognition of the

force of aggression. In his skeptical discussion of the commandmant "love thy neighbor as theyself" Freud brings forth many heartfelt examples of man's hostility to his fellow man. By chapter six he takes a clear position: aggression has a primary instinctual status, it is a motive force separate from sexuality and libido, and one with great power and importance. Here is how he puts it:

> I know that in sadism and masochism we have always seen before us manifestations of the destructive instinct . . . strongly allayed with erotism; but I can no longer understand how we can have overlooked the ubiquity of non-erotic aggressivity and destructiveness and can have failed to give it its due place in our interpretation of life. (p. 119)

And, at the conclusion of chapter six:

> In all that follows, I adopt the standpoint, therefore, that the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man, and I return to my view that it constitutes the greatest impediment to civilization . . . . I may now add that civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind. (p. 122)

He goes on to elaborate the image of civilization as a struggle between Eros and destructiveness, between the forces of love and those of aggression.

Several things should be emphasized about this shift in Freud's thought. First, we see a clear abandonment of libido or sexuality as the single instinct to which all others were reduced. While aggression, anger, hostility and related forces found a place

in earlier writings, the theoretical treatment always linked them with sexuality, usually with the terminology of "sadism" and "masochism." Freud breaks that linkage in the passage quoted above. There are certainly instances of sexualized-hatred and aggressivized-sexuality, but aggression and the problems it poses for human social life cannot be reduced to a unitary sexual instinct. In the present terms, the masculine-evil, as in warfare, cannot be derived from the feminine.

In addition to abandoning the sexual reductionism of libido theory, Freud has made a still larger shift. Where before it was sexuality, with its unceasing hunger for gratification, that stood in opposition to civilization and so was the basic source of human unhappiness, it is now aggression. And this same sexuality -- now clothed in its abstract name of Eros to be sure -- is seen as the great pro-civilization force. In the terms I have been using, Freud has struggled free from the male-centered perspective and reached a new vantage point from which all appears different. If we take Eros as a referent for mother-love, for supressed femininity, for sexuality, for the female-maternal principle -- and I think Freud's use is such that this is precisely how we should take it -- we see that depreciated feminine qualities have received a new valuation. And, if we equate what he is now calling the aggressive or destructive instinct with masculine qualities, with the father principle, with the drive for power and domination -- and I think this is consistent with his usage -- it is apparent that these previously extolled male qualities are now seen in a much more critical light. He has finally

come to question the values of the civilization, the science and the achievements that he had been committed to for so long. One can see how this shift in viewpoint in Civilization expands the conception of human nature by viewing both male and female qualities in terms of their productive and destructive potentials.

Civilization began by questioning the "false standards" of society -- "power, success and wealth" -- and by a searching for what is "of true value in life." That stated the problem on a descriptive level. After working through the various skeptical arguments concerning love and human connection, Freud found a way of treating the problem theoretically: with the introduction of an aggressive instinct separate from sexuality -- and associated with masculine qualities -- he is able to view the conflicts of civilization in terms of a broader perspective, one in which he can more directly discuss the destructive effects of unbalanced masculine aggressiveness.

The final two chapters of Civilization continue to open new possibilities. In a summary fashion this is what Freud says. Aggression is the chief cause of human unhappiness, both in the obvious form of conflict between persons and in the more subtle form of "conscience." In developing this second, crucial point, Freud relies on the theory of identification, introduced in Mourning and Melancholia and elaborated in The Ego and The Id (see the discussion in the section on Bisexuality in the previous chapter). In that theory, the child's emotionally conflicted relationships with the parents are resolved by an identification with them in which what was an external conflict -- between misbehaving child and critical or punitive parent -- becomes an

internal conflict between one part of the person and the other. This is the well-known account in which the conscience or superego develops as the internal voice of parental criticism and control. While this basic theory was present in earlier works, Civilization sharpens the focus on the primary role of aggression; the self-punishing superego is aggression turned on the self.

> . . .'Conscience' is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals. (p. 122)

In his account of the origins of the "ego's" aggressiveness toward others, Freud stresses the frustrations of pleasurable activities, loss of love and the fears or "social anxiety" engendered by parental threats. These conditions make it difficult for the child to express his anger and foster an internalization in which: "the aggressiveness of conscience keeps up the aggressiveness of the authority." (p. 128)

Sexuality is introduced into the discussion but in a very different way than in earlier, libido dominated views:

> . . . if we suppose, that is, that the prevention of an erotic satisfaction calls up a piece of aggressiveness against the person who has interferred with the satisfaction; and that this aggressiveness has itself to be suppressed in turn. But if this is so, it is after all only the aggressiveness which is transformed into a sense of guilt by being suppressed and made over to the superego. (p. 128)

In other words, the punitive superego and sense of guilt are fueled primarily by aggression; the discontents of civilization are not so much a matter of an insatiable pleasure principle as

of the excessive oppression of sexuality by internalized aggression.

The final sections of Civilization raise further questions about the harsh and impossible demands of society; demands and frustrations that create aggression which, in turn, feeds into conscience, the sense of guilt and neurotic suffering. Freud's conclusion is very clear: in discussing the course of the essay he states:

> . . . it corresponds faithfully to my intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt." (p. 134)

Thus, it is civilization itself that causes the discontents of civilized citizens. Anxiety, neurotic suffering, and guilt are the price that is paid for the accomplishments, the benefits, the triumphs of modern society. These painful conditions do not result from human instincts per se, but from the particular way in which such instinctual forces as aggression and sexuality are channeled and oppressed in the modern world. This view of the consequences of civilized life seems to me quintessentially psychoanalytic. Freud has found a way of "analyzing" his society from a position of neutrality somewhere "outside" it, just as he analyzed his patients. It is an instance of what I earlier termed the examination of a paradigm from a metaparadigmatic position. This mode of analysis, in which Freud has freed himself from conventional values, shows how the final chapters of Civilization are a completion of the unfinished journey. This is apparent, especially in the final chapter, where his discussion

of sexuality and aggression, of the interpersonal and social origins of anxiety and guilt, and the reappraisal of male and female qualities as aggression and Eros, are all carried forth from a position at odds with conventional assumptions, from a position clearly within the new psychoanalytic world view.

## A CONCLUDING NOTE

On a deep level, the problems in creating and maintaining a psychoanalytic world view persist for all who follow the path that Freud opened. The jouney -- the transition in paradigms -- will never be completed: if we have managed to move beyond some of the conventional values that were Freud's starting place, we are caught up in a new versions that arise from our current social framework. To be engaged in psychoanalytic work is to be exposed to the unconscious of oneself and others. And this unconscious confronts one with the price in conflict, anxiety, guilt, alienation and pain that is paid for the outward success, benefits and accomplishments of our society. What is one to do with the heretical knowledge gained in this way?

If Freud, the most inventive and insightful psychological genius of the century, had difficulty in fully freeing himself from the biases of his society, what chance do we have in transcending ours? We have his work -- and that of the many who have elaborated, expanded and modified it -- to build on, of course. And we live in a different age, one presumably more open-minded, democratic and understanding. But is it so different? How much of what seems new

and modern to us is really different from the world that Freud knew? When one looks past the surface changes in technology, education and social relations, at such underlying dimensions as the relative valuation of male and female qualities, one wonders at the depth of change. It may be true that psychoanalysis itself, and the many related forms of therapy, reflect some larger change in social consciousness. There seems to be a greater awareness of the unconscious, of the importance of subjectivity, intuition and emotional experience, changes that are reflected in modern fiction, drama and art. Perhaps of even greater importance, there have been major shifts in the treatment of children, with more recognition of the infant's need for love and maternal care, and a diminution of punitive discipline.

Yet, for all these changes, the dominant value system in the West retains many of its traditional qualities: the life of reason and objectivity, of work and control remain powerful ideals. Do not many still seek "power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, and . . . underestimate what is of true value of life"? Things appear to change yet they stay the same. And it is an awareness of this pull of the past that I would urge on all who work within the general framework of psychoanalysis, an awareness of how easy it is for conventional ideas and assumptions to masquerade as "new" or "modern" theory, therapy or social criticism. We should be guided by the spirit embodied in Freud's life and work and try to view both old and new, both the conventional and revolutionary, with equal understanding. Experience should make us cautious of

fixed truths, of answers and of certainty. It must be our task to question, to look beneath the surface, to view familiar events from yet another perspective, in short, to psychoanalyse.

## FOOTNOTES

1. A detailed critical discussion of aggression and the many theoretical complexities surrounding it, is provided by Erich Fromm in his book The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, (1973).

2. In her follow-up study of Anna O., Freeman (1972) notes that she devoted the remainder of her life to aiding young girls who had been abandoned. Robert Lifton, in an important discussion of the theoretical neglect of the broad theme of death and the continuity of life in psychoanalytic theory, has this to say about the case:

> Anna O., for example, is properly understood as a mourning reaction. The hysteria followed very quickly upon the death of Anna's father and had much to do with her reaction to that death. Her conception of being alive became altered in such a way that merely to live and feel -- to exist as a sexual being -- was dangerous, unpermissible, and a violation of an unspoken pact with the dead person. Whether or not there is a mourning reaction directly involved, hysteria tends to involve either this form of stasis or its seeming opposite, exaggerated movement or activity that serves as a similar barrier against feeling and living. These patterns again resemble those I encountered among Hiroshima survivors. (1974, p. 285).

3. From a letter to Marie Bonapart written in 1937. See Freud, 1960 p. 436.

4. Roy Schafer, in a perceptive discussion of the "patriarchal perspective" in Freud's theories; notes:

> These realizations establish, of course, the basis for the mother's great authority. Clinical analysts know that this mother's authority stays with her children throughout their subsequent lives. For her children, the prospect of being abandoned by her physically and emotionally, really or in fantasy, never loses its painful, if not terrifying aspect. If anxiety over castration at the father's hand threatens to undermine the boy's narcissistic integrity and his present and future masculine sexuality, anxiety over losing the mother or her love threatens to undermine the boy's and girl's very sense of worth or right to exist, and for both she is even a castrating figure of some consequence as well!

(1973, p. 278)

5. See the work of Gregory Bateson and his collaborators (Bateson et al., 1956; Bateson 1972) and the evidence presented by Lidz (1963); Laing and Esterson (1964) and the anthropologist Jules Henry (1971).

6. The connection of women-love-sexuality-death was not just an abstract or theoretical one for Freud as he reveals in his dream of the "Three Fates" (see The Interpretation of Dreams, pp. 204-6). The associations to this dream take him back to the childhood feelings of hunger, love, man's dependence on woman and the theme of life and death. He recalls how, as a little boy, his mother taught him "we were all made of earth and must therefore return to earth."

His associations lead to a recollection of the years in Brucke's laboratory, "in which I spent the happiest hours of my student life, free from all other desires -- in complete contrast to the desires which were now plaguing me in my dreams" (p. 206). Thus, he recalls a time when both sexuality and the awareness of death -- both fused in the symbolic image of the earth mother (the "Three Fates") -- were banished to his unconscious as he pursued the goals of science and ambition in the all-male world of scientific research.

This dream, and much else that emerged in the self-analysis, shows Freud moving beyond the narrow man-against-nature position of his earlier "scientific" and "masculine" commitments: it reveals him opening up to those repressed themes and feelings within himself associated with "feminine" qualities and the human connections with nature.

7. A great deal of evidence concerning the treatment of children in the past centuries of western civilization has come to light within recent years. DeMause (1974) presents a detailed account, showing that children in the past suffered extreme abuse and deprivation. The views and practices advocated by Schreber's father were not at all uncommon to nineteenth century European families. Even those who are skeptical of the gruesome picture DeMause paints, (see Stone, 1974) are in essential agreement with the overall view that large numbers of infants and children suffered deprivation of maternal care as well as harsh and punitive discipline.

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